

September 2012

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



September 22 is Falls Prevention Awareness Day

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year, one in every three adults age 65 and older falls. The chances of falling and being seriously injured in a fall increase with age. Falls can cause injuries such as hip fractures and head traumas.

Fear of falling can cause some people to limit their activities. This causes loss of physical fitness and makes a person less able to get around well.

The good news is falls are preventable. Here are some tips to help lower your risk.

⇒ *Exercise regularly.*

Exercise helps you to maintain and increase strength and balance. Talk to your doctor about what type of exercise is best for you.

⇒ *Ask your doctor or pharmacist about your medications.*

Medications can have side effects that increase your risk of falls.

⇒ *Get an eye exam at least once per year.*

Poor vision increases the likelihood that you could stumble on uneven surfaces. People with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as those without visual impairment.



⇒ *Eat a healthy diet.*

Getting an adequate amount of calcium and vitamin D can help prevent fractures if you do fall.

⇒ *Get screened and treated for Osteoporosis.*

Osteoporosis can make falls more likely to cause serious injury.

⇒ *Have walking aids properly fitted.*

If you use a walking aid, such as a cane or walker, be sure it has been fitted to you. Walking aids can help you maintain or improve your mobility if used correctly. Talk to your doctor about having it fitted and instruct you on how to use it safely.

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⇒ *Wear sensible shoes.*

Make sure that they fit properly, have a no skid surface and are sturdy.

⇒ *Check your home for possible trip hazards.*

- Make sure walkways are clear of cords, boxes, and papers.
- Remove all area rugs. Area rugs are very likely to make you trip.
- Add grab bars and stair rails where needed.
- Repair loose floorboards and carpeting right away.
- Store clothing, dishes, food and other necessities within easy reach.
- Immediately clean up spills.
- Use nonslip mats in your tub and shower.
- Keep your home brightly lit to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see. Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- Place a lamp within reach of your bed for middle-of-the-night needs.
- Make clear paths to light switches. Consider trading traditional switches for glow-in-the-dark or illuminated switches.



For More Information:

- Falls Among Older Adults Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html>
- Mayo Clinic Falls—<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fall-prevention/HQ00657>
- National Council on Aging—<http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/falls-prevention/>

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